

# The Central Intelligence Agency Today

## CIRA Luncheon Address, 20 May 1985

by James H. Taylor, Executive Director, CIA



It is a great pleasure to meet with such a supportive and friendly group.

It is also, I should point out, distressing to look out at all those relaxed, stress-free faces.

I know that all of you still have many friends and some of you have children or other relatives at the Agency. I hope that your years of experience with us gives you the ability to take press and other accounts of our activities with a big grain of salt. If you had access only to the press, you might believe that some of the following incidents or circumstances widely reported in the media are indicative of the near decline and fall of the Central Intelligence Agency. For example—the Rewald affair in Honolulu with the associated erroneous ABC report that we were guilty of calling for the murder of an American citizen. Or the various reports that people on Capitol Hill haven't been told what it is that we are really doing out at Langley. And, of course, the continuing saga of what we are or aren't doing, or are or are not responsible for, in most any place in the world—depending on the day of the week.

This is not to say that we don't need to be concerned about many things:

—Internally, we worry about the relative inexperience of too many of our people. The situation improves with almost every day that passes, but too many of our components still have too many relatively inexperienced, recently recruited employees—a legacy of our past roller-coaster contraction and expansion.

—We worry about whether the important and substantial investment program we have underway will continue to be

supported in the Executive Branch and Congress.

—We worry about the apparent continuing public appetite for sensationalist and irresponsible journalism which too often puts us on the defensive and has us explaining ourselves on Capitol Hill.

—We worry about the enthusiasm too much of our media share about the desirability of exposing national security information, and about the continuing decline in respect for the confidentiality so necessary to the continuance of our profession.

Fortunately lots of good things are underway, most of which aren't adequately reported on in the media. (Don't misunderstand, I'm not seeking coverage.) The most important of these has been the continuing revitalization of the Agency you served over so many years. Under Bill Casey's leadership, we are doing three very important things: First, we have substantially restored the personnel manning levels so significantly reduced during the decade of the 70's. Second, we are more than half-way into a considerable reinvestment program, a program of rebuilding all of the tools that let us do our job, including computers, communications and, of course, most visible of all, our physical plant. Finally, we are working to improve the *esprit* and can-do spirit which has always served us so well.

So it is clear that despite what we continue to see in the media, despite some destructive and negative forces, there is a lot of real support in the Executive Branch and in the Congress from those who wish to help us get what we need to do our job. (Congress is right now reviewing the 1986 program and, of course, it is possible that the very supportive environment we have had for the last few years will not continue. But the jury is still out, and we remain convinced—and the evidence is in our favor—that all our most important requirements will continue to be met.)

We have done other important things recently which have not been reported in the newspapers. Let me just mention two here from the support area. I refer first to taking over, from GSA, management of our building, making us responsible for our own physical plant. Month by month we are slowly getting adjusted to heating and air conditioning and elevators *that work*. You may find this trivial—some of you who did your best to keep our physical plant in good shape may even find it unbelievable—but it is having a demonstrable impact on your Agency and the morale of its people.

Second, I would note our new guard force. Have any of you driven through our gates in the last few days? Have you noticed the change? The very alert and interested faces? Again, some may scoff that this is not important. They're making a big mistake. Steps like this have a direct and positive impact on every one of us every day. I think everyone who drives through our gates feels a renewed